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## Brief sketch of the life of Thomas G. Clemson

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## Thomas G. Clemson

It gives us much pleasure to give space to the following brief sketch of the life of Thomas G. Clemson, the greatest benefactor of the present and coming generations of young manhood of South Carolina since the days of the Revolution. This sketch is taken from the "History of Old Pendleton District" which was written by the late Col. R. W. Simpson about two years before his death, and which has recently been printed and is now in the hands of his daughter, Miss Louise Simpson, at Clemson College, S. C.

Colonel Simpson was a life-long friend of Colonel Clemson and was his attorney and advisor, and no one was better equipped to know the life of this great benefactor than was Colonel Simpson.

"COL. THOMAS G. CLEMSON was born in the City of Philadelphia, July, 1807, died at Fort Hill, S. C., April 6th, 1888, and was buried at Pendleton, S. C. Colonel Clemson was six feet six inches tall. His features were handsome and his appearance was commanding. His deportment and manner were dignified and polished. His intellect was of a high order, and he was gifted with fine conversational powers. His views and opinions were broad and liberal and there was nothing narrow or contracted about him.

"While possessed of ample means he had no disposition to spend more money upon himself than was actually necessary. His greatest desire was to take care of his property and increase it that he might the better carry out his promise to his wife, which was to found an Agricultural College upon Fort Hill, upon the very spot she herself had selected for the location of the main college building. How faithfully he redeemed his promise to his dear wife, let Clemson College, as it stands to-day in all of its magnificence, speak.

Colonel Clemson well knew that the property donated for the purpose would not be sufficient to build and maintain such a college as he conceived of; but having a firm reliance upon the liberality of the State of South Carolina, he felt assured that when the necessities of the people, growing out of their changed conditions resulting from the effects of the war, were properly understood and appreciated, his efforts to benefit the farmers would be recognized, and that the State would supplement his donation by whatever amount might be necessary to establish the dream of his life. He reasoned wisely and correctly.

"Very early in life Colonel Clemson developed a great taste for the study of the sciences, especially chemistry, mineralogy and geology. In 1823, when hardly sixteen years old, he ran off from home, not on account of any disagreement with his parents, but simply for adventure and to see the world. At that time, though so young, was six feet tall and exceedingly handsome, both in form and feature. He first went to England, but remained there only a



short time and then visited Paris. At that time France was particularly friendly towards the United States, and this handsome young American very soon attracted the attention of the young nobility of the great city. Through these young men he also became acquainted with some of the leading officials of the city. During his stay in Paris he shouldered a musket and joined his young friends in several of the revolutions or outbreaks for which that city has been famous. His gallantry displayed on these occasions earned for him the respect and esteem of the officials, who rewarded him with a position in the celebrated School of the Mines. He remained at the school for four years and graduated with high honors. During his stay in Paris he also found time to indulge his taste for painting, and had as his teachers some of the celebrated artists of that time. By these means he became acquainted with many painters, both in France and Germany, which enabled him in after years to collect the many valuable and beautiful paintings which now adorn the walls of John C. Calhoun's old homestead at Fort Hill. During his stay in Europe his father died and his large estate was divided in such a way as to leave him no part of it, and just at the age of manhood found himself penniless; but he cheerfully set to work in the practice of his profession and very soon earned an enviable reputation. His services as mining expert were particularly valuable, and though established at Washington, his labors were not confined to this country alone, but extended to Cuba and South America also. His fees were large and he soon after amassed a

comfortable fortune. At Washington he was a conspicuous and prominent person, and he had the entry into the most exclusive families. Miss Floride, the eldest daughter of John C. Calhoun, was in Washington on a visit to her father, and there Colonel Clemson met her, and subsequently they were married at Fort Hill. Mrs. Clemson was among women what her distinguished father was among men. Her love for her home and country was superb, and to this noble, generous, and yet, gentle woman, South Carolina is much indebted for Clemson College as to the distinguished husband, Thomas G. Clemson. Colonel Clemson was a great admirer of John C. Calhoun and earnestly supported his political views and opinions. During the administration of President Jackson he was appointed Minister to Belgium, but having very little taste for politics, at the expiration of his term, he returned to his home in Washington, and resumed the work of his profession. At the beginning of the war Colonel Clemson was residing at his home in Washington City with his family, which consisted of his wife and his son, John C. Clemson, and daughter, Floride Clemson—the son and daughter about grown. It was well known to the authorities that the sympathies of Colonel Clemson were with the South, and for this reason his movements were closely watched, and some time in 1862 his arrest was ordered, but being warned by a friend that he would be arrested the next day, he and his son escaped during the night, and crossed the Potomac in a row boat. Landing on Virginia soil they did not stop until they reached Richmond, having



walked the entire distance. Upon arriving in Richmond they both tendered their services to President Davis. John C. was at once appointed a lieutenant in the army and assigned to duty. Colonel Clemson was assigned to the mining department of the trans-Mississippi. Here he remained in the service to the close of the war. At this time Mrs. John C. Calhoun resided at Pendleton, and here Colonel Clemson was reunited with his family, and here they resided until the death of Mrs. Calhoun in the latter part of 1866.

Previous to the war, Mrs. Calhoun had sold their old home—Fort Hill—and all her property thereon, to her son, Col. Andrew P. Calhoun, taking his bond and mortgage for the purchase money. Of this bond and mortgage Mrs. Calhoun willed three-fourths to her daughter—Mrs. Thomas G. Clemson, and one-fourth to Mrs. Clemson's daughter, Miss Floride, who subsequently married Mr. Gideon Lee, of New York. The mortgage of Col. A. P. Calhoun was foreclosed, and Mrs. Clemson bought in Fort Hill, and divided it with her daughter, Mrs. Lee, in proportion to the interest of each under Mrs. Calhoun's will. In 1871, Mrs. Floride Lee died, leaving one child, a daughter. Only seventeen days after Mrs. Lee's death, John C. Clemson was killed near Seneca by a collision of two trains on the Blue Ridge Railroad. The loss of their only two children was a terrible shock to Mr. and Mrs. Clemson. Desolate, they mourned—all the brightness had been blotted out of their lives, but unsearchable are the Providences of God, for it was then that these two stricken, sorrowing parents determined to unite in so disposing of all

they had left of their property as to bring to their fellowmen as much happiness and prosperity as they could have wished for themselves. They agreed to make wills to each other, and promised that the survivor would make a will donating all of their joint property to erect an Agricultural College at Fort Hill. In 1875, Mrs. Clemson died suddenly of heart disease, while Mr. Clemson was absent from home. Many persons in Pendleton remember the grief of this old and now desolate man at the grave, when the remains of the devoted partner of his life were being laid to rest. The remaining years of his life Mr. Clemson spent desolate and alone, at Fort Hill. After awhile he began to take more interest in affairs. He was fond of reading and kept around him the leading newspapers and standard magazines, by which he was enabled to keep in touch with his fellowmen; otherwise he lived the life of a hermit, at least for several years after the death of Mrs. Clemson. Eventually, however, his mind became fixed upon the one purpose of fulfilling the promise to his wife, and erecting the college they had planned. Then he began again to visit his friends, and many were the efforts he and his friends made to interest others in this great work. During this time he looked carefully after his finances, and tried to save all he could for the college. But still he provided generously for the faithful helpers who remained with him, and wished very much to help other poor friends in distress and did so. It was the privilege of the writer to visit him frequently during the last two years of his life, and during this time he talked freely of his life and



experiences. He portrayed, in a manner never to be forgotten, the condition the South was sure to be plunged into if something was not done to arrest the destructive tendencies of the times. Education, such as we had before our conditions were changed by the war, was all right, but not enough. To become successful the Southern people had to become practical, and a practical education was necessary to meet the people's necessities. During the latter part of his life he talked a great deal about religious matters and became very much concerned about the salvation of his soul. He requested the ministers to visit him. One good man who was with him to the last, said that beyond a doubt he had made his peace with his God, and his last words were in behalf of the poor and suffering. Can the people of South Carolina ever forget Thomas G. Clemson and the great work he helped to accomplish for them? If this is possible visit Fort Hill and look around you!"

"This is the faithful tribute of Colonel Simpson to his friend, Thos. G. Clemson.

"Clemson College has been partly burned, and has been rebuilt. Additions have been made from time to time. Recently large additions have been planned, and very soon more than eight hundred young men can be educated at this College along practical lines. The College is in a very prosperous condition."

What's the use of being in the Knocker's Section of the Anvil Chorus, when the Builder's Committee of the Booster Club is right next door waiting for you.

## A Magazine for Anderson.

From The Daily Mail.

Anderson is soon to have a home magazine. The first issue will come from the presses of the Oulla Printing & Binding Co., about the 15th of next month, and the publication will be issued once each month thereafter. The name of the magazine will be the Piedmont Magazine, with illustrations to make it contain an average of 100 pages, and will be devoted to matters of interest to the State and the Piedmont section, carrying local features and foreign matter and fiction which will make it compare most favorably with other magazines of the same class. The articles will be illustrated, and the magazine will be printed on good book paper, having each month an attractive cover design.

Mr. J. H. Oulla, who is at the head of the Oulla Printing & Binding Co., has for some time been considering the advisability of issuing a magazine from his plant, such as that now to be gotten out and has decided that it will fill a long-felt want, and at the same time prove a paying proposition. The subscription of The Piedmont will be \$1.50 a year, and it will be placed on sale at all news stands at 15 cents per copy.

The plant of the Oulla Printing & Binding Co., is one of the most complete in the State, which fact insures the success of the new magazine from the mechanical point of view. This, with arrangements he has to print matter of local interest as well as foreign matter, with illustrations and good fiction, and a good run of advertising matter, he believes will assure the success of the venture from the start.

Specimen copies of the new magazine, that have just been gotten up by Mr. Oulla, show that it will be a most attractive publication, and it is thought that he will have little trouble in placing numbers of subscriptions for the publication.

The Golden Rule will smooth more things than any hammer.

WANTED.—An energetic young man or young lady in each community to take subscriptions for THE PIEDMONT MAGAZINE. For further particulars address The Piedmont Magazine, Anderson, S. C.